



AN INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN MINDFULNESS

WEEK 1: FOCUS ON THE SOIL

Mindful Social Action

“Active engagement in social justice is critical for Christian witness if we love the world that God created and loves. The purpose of mindfulness in social action is to stay rooted in God’s mission in the world. Mindfulness can wake us up when we get busy with our own agenda or promote our ego-investment in being right. In addressing systemic injustice, we can fall prey to the cycle of reactivity that breeds fear and mistrust and reduces the ‘other’ to a caricature. Christian mindfulness helps us to be honest about our motives, courageous about our desires, and keeps our eye on God’s outpouring and leading. It’s easy to get burned out if we carry everything on our shoulders and leave God behind. Our own passion for justice can make us vulnerable to self-righteousness, belittling those with whom we disagree or even mirroring the very behaviors we find offensive. Exercised mindfully, our longing for God’s reign to ‘let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream’ (Amos 5:24) can bear real fruit in the world.”**

Getting Started

1. Attentive Breathing (30 seconds)

First, breathe slowly and deeply. As you breathe, notice the sensation of air in your nose and lungs. Fully experience your body breathing as a gift God has given you. While your body chooses to breathe for you, you can choose to breathe in an attentive and mindful way.

2. Attentive Embodiment (30 seconds)

Continue to breathe mindfully and let your breathing fill your whole body, providing life-giving oxygen from the tip of your head down to your toes. Notice what arises in your body—sensations or feelings. Simple noticing is all that is required without analyzing, judging, or fixing. Attentiveness connects us to God who meets us where we are, in our bodies, right here, right now.

3. Acknowledgment (30 seconds)

Acknowledge whatever arises from your mindful breathing and embodiment. Acknowledge the thoughts, feelings, sensations, or attitudes that are in you right now. We spend a lot of energy every day trying to avoid, deny, repress, or reject what is actually happening in our bodies. Pay prayerful attention to what is with an open heart to discover what God might be up to. As you hold all that arises before God, let God hold it with you. Acknowledge God’s sharing in it with you and experience God’s loving gaze upon it all in this moment.

4. Discovery (30 seconds)

As you acknowledge whatever arises, holding it within God’s presence, see what you discover. Do thoughts or feelings shift shapes? Increase or diminish? Does a thought or attitude disappear altogether like a boat floating away? What is the longing of your heart? Where do you see abundance? Notice and acknowledge what you discover.*

*(Taken from: Right Here Right Now: The Practice of Christian Mindfulness by Amy G. Oden Copyright © 2017 by Abingdon Press, pages *49-52; **76-78.)*

Prayer Practice

With a posture of prayerful mindfulness, you are invited to light a candle and place it in the soil. Stay attentive to your breathing with the following breath prayer (or choose one that acknowledges God’s abundant presence with you right now):

Inhale: Master Gardener,

Exhale: plant your love in me.